

additional references to Nagahama. The basic references to Kerr do not address this problem and the Examiner, in hindsight, tries to modify Kerr to solve a problem that Kerr does not recognize. This addition of Nagahama to Kerr is obviously a modification of Kerr using Applicants' specification as a teaching to do so which in itself is not proper but also does not meet the above noted critical shrinkage limitation. Therefore, the rejection of all of the claims should be withdrawn.

Claims 1 – 8 + 10 further require the rubber backing sheet to have a heat shrinkage factor of about 2.0 to about 2.5% which further limitation is not anticipated. It should be noted, Page 14, lines 13 and 14 of the specification, that standard substrate shrinkage rates are in the range of 3.5 to 7.5% which is substantially higher than the claimed shrinkage rate of about 2.0 to 2.5%. Without any teaching it is difficult to see how the addition of Nagahama meets the critical shrinkage rates.

Claims 11 – 17, like claims 1 – 8 and 10 above, require the non-woven substrate to have the critical 2.0 to about 2.5% shrinkage and also require the rubber backing sheet and reinforcement sheet to possess a modulus strength of greater than about 1000 pounds per square inch. This combination of substrate shrinkage and strength, not shown or disclosed in the prior art, provides a long lasting, wrinkle-free mat which unexpectedly provides a long service life due to the claimed, critical physical properties.

Therefore, it is respectfully requested that claims 1 – 8 and 10 – 17 be allowed and that the case be passed to issue.



Respectfully requested,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to The Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, DC 20231, on August 10, 2001, along with a postcard receipt.

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